

News from the Embassy of Egypt | Ambassador Zahran's First 100 Days

In the spirit of the Biden administration's first 100 days, the Embassy of Egypt would like to share with you a piece authored by Ambassador Zahran on his own experiences in Washington during his first 100 days as ambassador.

The ambassador reflects on the dynamics of Washington in a COVID-19 world, his mission as ambassador to-date, and the many facets of the strategic U.S.-Egypt partnership.

We invite you share with us your thoughts on the piece and look forward to engaging with you. More information can be found on the [Embassy of Egypt website](#).

Yours,

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My First 100 Days as Egypt's Ambassador to The U.S.

Seated on the East Lawn of the White House for the signing ceremony of the Abraham Accords, a peace treaty that Egypt was among the first to welcome, I couldn't help but reminisce about the day Anwar Sadat stood in this same spot forty-two years ago. He was here then, bravely, to take the first step toward a lasting peace in the Middle East, arm-in-arm with our longtime partner, the United States.

Despite the challenges that have faced us on the road to regional security since that momentous day, forward movement such as the Abraham Accords could never have been realized without Egypt's role as the trailblazer. Indeed, Egypt's peace with Israel has proven durable, weathering all manner of counter reaction, and has become inspirational, guiding others over time toward a more productive and conflict-free future.

As a tool of statecraft, Egypt has historically employed the power of reason—or what in today's political parlance is called “smart power.” Just the right approach for a region in which actors too often lead with passion. In this way, by circumnavigating dogmatic and often belligerent thinking, Egypt has made tremendous strides, and as a result the Arab and Islamic worlds have come around to a renewed appreciation of our political perspective.

The signing of the Abraham Accords took place the day after I arrived in Washington to begin my ambassadorship. I had lived here before. My children's earliest memories were made in this city; my wife and I made true friends here. And yet I knew we were returning to live and work in the American capital during that most daunting of euphemisms, “interesting times.”

The COVID-19 work environment has been a challenge for everyone, diplomats no less than Uber drivers. And I came back to a Washington in the grip of a political season in which the electorate had become acutely polarized, a season in which facts had lost their primacy and conversations were reduced to campaign ads.

In this new Washington, the world has lately been seen through a distorted lens, one that loses sight of longtime friends. Even between the U.S. and Egypt there has been a distancing. But such a state of affairs between two great nations with a natural affinity for one another—the one a superpower that has gifted the world with stability for over 75 years, the other a regional anchor of peace, security, and stability—must be put right.

So I have made it my mission since arriving in Washington to speak with congressional leaders who represent the spectrum of opinion on U.S. foreign policy. In academic circles I have reached out to staunch supporters of the U.S.-Egypt relationship as well as to principled critics. It has become clear to me through these many conversations that much of Egypt's recent social and political evolution has not yet been fully perceived or digested by our American friends.

As Egypt's new ambassador, it is both my job and my honor to point out that the reservoir of good will between our two nations runs deep. And no wonder: Egypt's ambitions mirror America's ambitions; our virtues are your virtues. The transformation of our society that we are undertaking is in line with what America has already achieved. For instance: Egypt is leading the Middle East into renewable energy and is set to become a major energy hub for the region. On the tech and business fronts we are becoming a haven for Middle Eastern start-ups. Politically we have dedicated ourselves to promoting religious freedom and tolerance, doing away with limiting taboos, and revamping our legal framework to advance personal

liberties. Geopolitically we aim to advance efforts geared towards reaching political settlements to the different conflicts that have marred the Middle East for years and decades strengthening disarmament and nonproliferation norms, and ending its “forever wars”.

President El-Sisi was the first Arab leader to congratulate President Biden on his success. For me this is testament to the Egyptian people’s sincere affection for the U.S. With this in mind, I look forward to representing my nation as a partner with Washington for peace and prosperity. May God bless Egypt and the United States in solidifying their reliable strategic partnership.

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